Andover Newton Bulletin

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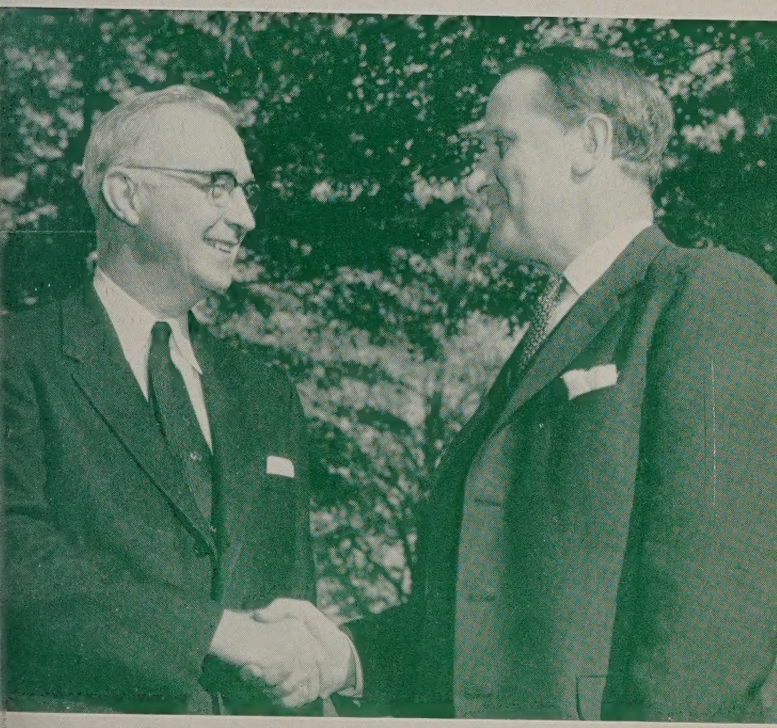

Fall Convocation Issue

1957

THE ANDOVER NEWTON BULLETIN
VOL. XLX DECEMBER, 1957 No. 3

The Fall Convocation, featured annually by the John M. English and the Stephen Greene lectures, is one of the highlights of the academic year at Andover Newton. The former lectureship was established by Newton Alumni in honor of a distinguished and beloved professor of homiletics who taught at Newton from 1892 to 1927, and this foundation makes it possible to bring to the School great preachers of our day "to strengthen interest in homiletics." The latter was endowed in 1917 by members of his family in memory of one who for long had been a devoted member of the Newton Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to bring lecturers on "important subjects related to Christianity in recent history" to convocations on the Hill.

The English lecturer this year was the Reverend David H. C. Read, minister of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City, and we are privileged to be able to print his two lectures herewith. The Greene lecturer was Professor Albert C. Outler, of Southern Methodist University, and we include a brief summary of his two lectures pending later publication elsewhere in full.

The Southworth Lectureship was established in 1866 at Andover Theological Seminary by Edward Southworth of West Springfield and by Wells Southworth of New Haven, Connecticut, to provide lectures at occasional intervals on various aspects of Congregational history and polity. In view of the celebration this year of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Andover Theological Seminary, the first congregational seminary in America, it is particularly fitting that the Southworth lecturer should have been one who is a trustee of this School and a former Headmaster of Phillips Andover Academy. Dr. Fuess's lecture is also published in this issue.

Dr. Charles M. McConnell, a beloved and distinguished member of our Faculty from 1929 to 1935, died on September 6, 1957. We join with members of his immediate family, former colleagues in other Schools, and many friends and former students in rejoicing in what God has done for us and our generation through his devoted servant, even as we mourn his death, and we include in this issue Dean Muelder's moving tribute to him at the funeral service in Deering, New Hampshire.

S. MACLEAN GILMOUR, *Editor.*

Frontispiece: Dr. David H. C. Read, left, and Dr. Albert C. Outler, right, at Annual Fall Convocation, October 16, 1957. *Photo by Lenscraft*

Issued six times a year in the months of July, October, December, February, April and June by the Andover Newton Theological School, 210 Herrick Road, Newton Centre 59, Massachusetts. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts.

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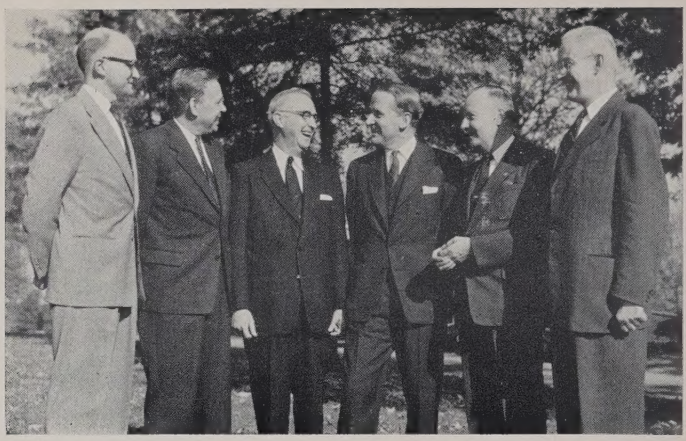
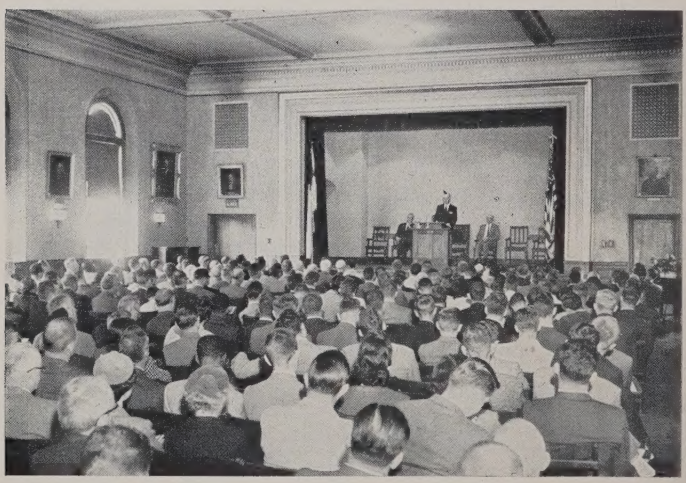


AT FALL CONVOCATION

Left to right: Dean Roy Pearson, Dr. Nels F. S. Ferré, Abbot Professor of Theology; Dr. Albert C. Outler, Dallas, Texas; Dr. David H. C. Read, New York, Dr. S. MacLean Gilmour, Norris Professor of New Testament; and President Herbert Gezork.



Capacity audience at Fall Convocation

THE ENGLISH LECTURES

MISSION TO MY NEIGHBOR

DAVID H. C. READ

I

When Dr. Alexander White and Dr. Hugh Black were colleagues in the pulpit of Free St. Georges in Edinburgh some years ago, there was a popular saying to the effect that in the morning service Dr. White used to paint the saints black while in the evening Dr. Black used to paint the sinners white. Whether or not this is a true description of the homiletic powers of two great preachers, it will remind us of the two great areas with which the pulpit is perennially concerned — the inner circle of the more or less convinced believers and the outer circle of the generally unconvinced. From the days of the apostles every preacher who is truly conscious of his calling as a servant of the Word knows that he has this double duty. He must on the one hand in his exposition and explanation of Scripture seek what the New Testament calls the edification of the body of Christ, while on the other he is under compulsion to declare to the unbeliever the truth of the Christian gospel. He is thus at once the teacher and the evangelist. He is concerned all the time with what modern scholars have taught us to call the *Didache* and the *Kerygma* of the New Testament.

No sensitive pastor, of course, would be so foolish as to try to make an absolute distinction between these two types of preaching. Every good sermon, like the New Testament, contains elements of both, since no preacher has the divine omniscience to detect that he is addressing a congregation of the entirely convinced or of the totally skeptical. Yet there is no doubt that our relative emphasis will be historically and geographically conditioned: there are some periods in history and there are some sectors of the globe where what we might call the relative density of Christians is greater than at other times and places, and it is part of our prophetic task to distinguish the nature of the time and place in which we are summoned to expound the Word of God. If you were to examine, for instance, the sermons of the average parish clergyman in the England of the 18th century, you would, I think, find that they were based on a somewhat different estimate of the situation from that arrived at by John Wesley.

Whether or not we believe that there is still such a thing as Christendom — a broad area of the Western world where Christian

ideas and standards of behaviour are still generally accepted; whether or not we believe that this country can truly be described by the adjective "Christian"; we must surely be singularly insensitive to the thoughts and convictions of our neighbors if we do not realize that only a small fraction of the people among whom we live in almost any community today is thoroughly convinced of the truth of the major tenets of the Christian faith. It is one of the penalties of the Christian ministry that we are forced to move too exclusively in the circles of believers and semi-believers, and are too often shielded by our professional status from the honest opinions of those who are not. Yet I doubt if there are any ministers today who are so monastically sealed from the life and conversation of their fellow-men as to be unaware of the general climate of bewilderment and doubt. We do not need public-opinion polls to remind us of the religious illiteracy of our age. Nor are we unaware of the quite fundamental questionings that agitate the minds of even the most loyal of the flock. A frequent question of the younger generation is "why do ministers always preach as if we believed it all already and were already committed?"; but perhaps even more surprising is the occasional spark of honest skepticism struck from an old-established church member in the course of casual conversation. It is probably true that the post-World-War II generation is not on the whole as religiously skeptical as that of post-World-War I, but it is, if anything, even more bewildered. The current swing to religion in this country has more to do with an increased readiness to examine the claims of religion and a despairing rejection of any alternative solutions, than with any kind of informed and resolute Christian conviction.

We are, therefore, surely in a missionary situation. I doubt whether we have begun seriously to draw the homiletic conclusions. It is, however, dawning on us that we can no longer make the comfortable distinction between the work of a minister and that of an evangelist. If there ever were a time when a minister could confine his duties to nourishing the flock while leaving the lost sheep to be hunted down by the itinerant evangelist, it is certainly not now. Church statistics should not be allowed to blind us to the truth that in our generation it is the ninety-and-nine that are lost. And they are lost, not in some far country, but right here beside us — in the house next door, sitting next to us in a bus, eating at our table, reading the same papers and watching the same television. They are our neighbors, and this is where our mission begins.

The situation, then, of the church in the so-called Christian West, is one that demands a re-examination of our preaching emphasis and

assumptions. We are clearly not declaring the Christian message to a community where its basic elements are generally received, and its doctrines unquestioned. Yet we are not in the position of the primitive church or one of the younger churches of Africa today — in spite of current talk about a "post-Christian" age and the apparent anxiety of minority-minded believers to scurry back to the catacombs. We are speaking in a community that has been saturated with Christian ideas and whose way of life has been conditioned by centuries of practice and conviction. A Scottish professor of my acquaintance was heard to declare: "I may be an atheist, but I'm a *Presbyterian* atheist." Substitute for "Presbyterian" the major Christian tradition of any area in the modern West and you discover something important about our non-church neighbor. Our atheists are *Christian atheists* — that is, the God whom they are rejecting is the *Christian* God. Even more significantly, they are often rejecting him for specifically Christian reasons: "I cannot believe in a God who allows this to happen," they say, basing their judgment upon their unconscious acceptance of two thousand years of Christian teaching as to the nature of God. Our agnostics are *Christian* agnostics (the very word was adopted by Thomas Huxley from St. Paul's reference to the "unknown God"), and they are not sociologically recognizable except as the by-product of a Christian society. And the most typical of all our neighbors — the man who button-holes the minister at a wedding reception to explain that he does not belong to any church but believes in all of them, and has a religion of his own — is surely the product of a society still haunted by at least the ghost of a gospel.

In such a society the preacher is surely called upon to learn the art of persuasion. If we recognize that we are speaking to neighbors for whom the Christian affirmations have become doubtful, false, or totally meaningless, we shall have to give new attention to the art of exposition for the unbeliever. The problem is one of communicating the staggering Christian claim that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." These few words raise almost every difficulty that besets our neighbor: the existence of God, God as a person, the divinity of Christ, redemption, atonement, and the nature of sin. Of course, if we are not concerned with the apostolic gospel and are content to minister a self-service religion that fits men's practical needs as neatly as it avoids the major issues of our existence, the problem will not arise. And which one of us preachers can say that we have never been tempted to eliminate the tragic dimension in order to communicate more easily — and apparently more helpfully — with the man in the pew? It is when

we come to proclaim the gospel in its supernatural stature and Biblical profundity that the veil seems to fall between pulpit and pew. And it is precisely now, when the theological revival in our seminaries should be releasing a generation with a new allegiance to the historic creeds of the church, that we need to struggle to understand the elements of which that veil is composed.

It is unfortunate that the recovery within the Protestant tradition of the theological content of our message, the new awareness of the apostolic gospel and the Biblical dimensions of the faith, should have elicited a corresponding suspicion of any attempt to explain and to convince. When Neo-orthodoxy (how I detest those labels!) came in through the front door, a timid and gaudy little butterfly called Apologetics flitted quietly out of the top window. In the sterner theological climate she was no longer socially acceptable, tainted as she was with the atmosphere of a flighty liberalism as old-fashioned as the 1920 dresses of "The Boy Friend." The young preacher with his ears attuned to a resounding "Thus saith the Lord" was not in the least inclined to meet his unbelieving neighbor with the art of argument and soft persuasion. Persuasion belonged to the generation who delighted in the discussion of "spiritual values" and the demonstration of the reasonableness of the Christian Faith. Now the preacher had re-discovered the authority of the Word, the "scandal" of the gospel, and the offence of the Cross, it seemed treason to imagine that a sympathetic approach and rational arguments could have any place in the armory of the Christian ministry.

The result has been that the most persuasive voices in our contemporary church have often been those that have least to say about the apostolic gospel, while those that are sounding the Biblical notes of sin and judgment, suffering, salvation, redemption, and eternal life are noticeably failing to communicate. One has even a suspicion that some who are entirely convinced of the supernatural power and unique authority of the gospel do not really *want* to communicate. The mere fact that a man may have popular appeal indicates to them that the truth is not in him. Whatever reservations we may have about the theology of Billy Graham, no one can deny that the heart of his message is the Biblical proclamation of the crucified and risen Christ, and salvation by grace through faith. Yet his crusades are often greeted by those who share this Biblical conviction with cries of horror and alarm. Why? Because of his popular appeal and demonstrated powers of persuasion. I am aware, of course, that this is not the whole story, that there is a proper theological care for the interpretation of the Word, and a right concern over the possibility of substituting a technique of evangelism

for the work of the Spirit. Yet it seems to me that we must also guard against that *trahison des clercs,* the heresy of the intellectual, which undervalues the simpler religious emotions of our neighbors and seals off the message of the gospel in the jargon of the schools.

I plead then for some new attention to the Cinderella of modern theology — the science of Apologetics. Let us listen to all that has been so painfully learned in this last generation about the gospel that will always remain "to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness." Let us absorb the ecumenical re-discovery of the nature of the church, and the scholars' re-affirmation of the unity and authority of the Bible. Let us be possessed by the uniqueness of our Lord, and the supernatural power of Word and Sacrament. This — and nothing less, nothing more attune to the spirit of the age — is the content of our commission. Then let us learn again to love our neighbor — which surely means a strenuous attempt to understand why and where he does not believe, a sympathetic entering into his confusion, and a new concern to speak his language. If we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, we cannot accept the proposition that the only way to communicate with our contemporaries is to say something less than the gospel.

Whenever I am tempted to believe that popular argument and discussion have no place in the mission to my neighbor and that the gospel is only accessible to those few who are mysteriously pre-disposed to believe it, I remember the evidence of the New Testament. Here, of course, we find no basis for believing that the gospel will have resounding popular success, or that multitudes can be wafted into the Kingdom of God on a magic carpet of painless emotion. The summons is drastic and the call to commitment quite radical. Yet the New Testament is throughout a "vulgar" book, a book for the crowd — and in no sense for the spiritual and intellectual élite. The Holy Spirit, as it were, with the whole range of graceful and classical Greek at his disposition, chose the *Koine,* the language of the man in the street, for the communication of the gospel. And what do we find in the records of the teaching of Jesus himself? Not, certainly, anything resembling an easy course on popular religion. (How strange that any should have interpreted the parables this way — these strenuous and shocking tales, designed not to satisfy but to disturb.) Yet there is clear evidence that Jesus spoke to his neighbors — and in language that they understood. In fact it belongs to the mystery of the Incarnation that the Son of God became man in the particularity of this period of time and corner of the world. With such understanding and compassion did he speak to *his* neighbors that *our* neighbors often require a serious work of interpre-

tation and understanding of his words. His mission to his neighbor reveals that identification which is the secret of his grace and is symbolized in the act of his baptism by John. And in the pursuit of that mission we find him using not only the more-than-prophetic word of "Verily, verily, I say unto you," but also the arts of teaching, illustration, and persuasion. It is significant that it is after he has been using the dialectic of the rabbinical schools, according to St. Mark's report, that the comment is made; "And common people heard him gladly" — the text that might be inscribed in gold across the homiletic departments of our seminaries.

No one is likely to accuse St. Paul of having been "soft" on the Jewish or pagan world of his day. His gospel was no glib accommodation to the spiritual yearnings of his contemporaries, but "the power of God unto salvation." And he knew that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Yet we discern in the Acts and the Epistles his dedication of mind and heart to the art of persuasion. He speaks in one way to a Roman soldier; in another to the leaders of the synagogue; in yet another to the gentlemen of Athens. When he claims that he is "made all things to all men," he surely refers to this passionate identification which belongs to a man "in Christ" through which operates the grace of persuasion — "that I might by all means save some." His conviction of the supremacy and priority of God's grace never for a moment releases him from the urgency of his appeal for faith; and his belief that it is the Spirit of God who opens the human heart to the gospel never stops him from using every art of persuasion on Jew and Gentile alike.

Subsequent Church history has shown that the unique and once-for-all gospel must be "made flesh" again in each succeeding generation. It is not a "deposit of faith" (an unhappy expression which always suggests to me the sediment that is left when the good live wine of the gospel has been poured out) but Good News to be proclaimed in the idiom of the day. This was well understood by the early Fathers and indeed was consistently the policy of the church until Latin Christianity froze the stream, and in the end the Council of Trent made the wedding of the gospel to Aristotelian philosophy binding on one half of the church for all time. But it is not only in the Church of Rome that we find a freezing of the tradition, and it is certainly not in the Church of Rome that we find a lack of apologetic concern and the art of persuasion. Protestantism has suffered from its own kind of inability to speak the New Testament Word in the real language of each age. The power of the Reformation lay in this break through of the gospel to the startled and bewildered world of the Renascence. Luther and Calvin conducted a mission to

their neighbors at the point of their greatest need and succeeded in commending again to the Western world the gospel of the free grace of the sovereign God. But it was not long before their systematizing successors once again froze the stream, and it was only the efforts of new thinkers and great evangelists that kept the Christian message in living contact with each new generation.

This, then, is the perennial problem of the "Mission to my Neighbor" — to remain faithful to the Word of God, the revelation enshrined in Scripture and transmitted in the confessions and standards of the church; and at the same time to know how to communicate it in the life and language of the age we live in. We ought not to be confined to the dilemma of either choosing to be wholly understood with only half a gospel, or half understood with the total gospel. It is our task so to enter into the problems and thought-processes of our unbelieving contemporaries that the verities of the creeds can become alive and relevant. This is not to say that there is a formula to be found which will bring our neighbors flocking to the Christian church; but it is to say that we ought never to be satisfied that it is not our fault when they have not understood.

It may be helpful, then, to look at some of those areas in which the Christian gospel meets with least understanding and response in our modern world. Everyone who is engaged on the frontiers of faith is aware of certain sensitive points where Christian conviction comes up against antagonism, misunderstanding, or just blank unbelief. In examining these sensitive points we do well to remember that we too are of our modern age. Ministers are familiar with the curious delusion of the laity that they have somehow been shielded from the slings and arrows of a sceptical generation and have grown to maturity in splendid isolation from the deep temptations of a secular world. We may, all unwittingly, deceive them: we cannot deceive ourselves. You and I do not live in the age of the New Testament, or of the Fathers, or the Reformers; but in this mid-twentieth century, exposed to its blasts and nurtured in its storms. There is, or should be, no current pulsing in the life of our neighbor that we have not also known or sensed. "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?" The way forward in the work of evangelism is certainly not in the direction of a cloistered virtue, an ivory tower of religion to which we invite the victims of the highway traffic, but in the steps of our Master right there where men and women are engaged with the actions and passions of human encounter. The Mission to my Neighbor is not carried out *de haut en bas,* from some lofty eminence of serene faith to the struggling mass of doubters and worriers. He is my neighbor

because we share the same little room on this speck of cosmic dust and the same few years in the short and crowded history of man. He is my neighbor because he too is made in the image of God, and I too am the sinner for whom Christ died. In commending to him the gospel of salvation, I am simply one hungry man saying to another hungry man: "Look, here is bread." And it is my business to know, to feel, to understand why it is that in great numbers he does not respond.

II

In attempting to select specific points at which our neighbors stumble when we speak the word of Christ, I am aware that no man can do more than talk from his own experience. What I have in mind in these lectures is the line of conversation that develops when we break through the surface relationship of churchman and non-churchman, and attempt to share our faith in the free and honest encounter of two minds. That more than mind is involved goes without saying, but it is from the articulated or semi-articulated expressions of our uncommitted friends that we can best estimate the current climate of unbelief. The more we are engaged in such conversations on the frontier of the church, the less likely we are to waste pulpit ammunition on these puppets we set up on the edge of the pulpit because we know which strings to pull to make them collapse. We must pray to be delivered from raising only those questions to which we think we know the answers. What we need is a little more of the art of sensitive listening and a little less of the facility of smart reply.

(1) The first area of which I want to speak could be described in terms of almost total lack of communication. There are large numbers of our contemporaries for whom the language of religion, whether the Christian or any other, has almost ceased to have meaning. The words "God," "faith," "prayer," "eternity," and the like have got what the logical positivists would call "no point of reference." (Logical positivism, as a philosophy, could be called a rationalization of this religious color blindness.) In this area today we find not so much the militant atheist of a former generation (for they have got nothing to be atheist about), but rather men and women

who are frankly puzzled by what we mean. In a University discussion group I once heard a famous physicist say that he was fascinated by what others had reported about religious experience, but that for him unfortunately it was a closed book. He could not remember ever having had anything whatever in the nature of a religious experience. It is rare to hear this explicitly avowed, but there are many, even among those who make an occasional, or even regular act of religious conformity, of whom it would be true. We rub shoulders day by day with men and women who live in a world which is apparently our world — and yet, in a profound sense, it is not our world at all. A dimension which for us is basic is just not there.

The more intensely we have been reared in the Christian tradition, the more difficulty we have in understanding this neighbor of ours. That is why some dialogues comes to the impasse: "You've been given faith: I haven't. Period." Yet the difference can never be absolute. For the believer can never wholly accept the statement that his neighbor is, and has always been, totally without contact with God. And the believer is himself nearer to this same position than perhaps he has ever imagined. Let me take the second point first.

Religious education is in itself not sufficient to guarantee a lively sense of the reality of God. When it is, as so often today, received in a kind of vacuum, and is not found to correspond with the way of the adult world, it can boomerang. That is why a student, and quite often a theological student, can pass quickly from a position of almost unquestioning adherence to the tenets of the church into this area of religious nihilism. In a flash the words that formerly conveyed an apparently profound meaning and significance can become mere sounds — and life without these sounds seems to go on much the same as before. What happens articulately on the student level can happen unconsciously to the man who is afraid to let his feelings find words. Outwardly conforming to his religious tradition, he has really ceased to live by any corresponding reality. This is the man the psalmist bluntly describes by the words: "The fool hath said in his heart: No God." The heart, the inner life, has come to be conditioned by a godless world. At some point, perhaps without realizing it, he has lost contact; and the religious words he still uses are just gravestones on a departed faith. But this is not just the experience of the careless and conventional believer. It would probably surprise us to know how many of those whom we have regarded as among the imperturbable saints of the church have at times walked close to this precipice-edge of total disbelief. In the mission to my neighbor we are more likely to convey in the end the saving word if we have less of the attitude of the "have"

to the "have-nots" and more of "There, but for the grace of God, go I." You have probably also remarked that in discussion with a total unbeliever you are liable to generate heat in inverse proportion to the real security of your faith.

But what *is* our faith at this point? Surely it is that our God is also our neighbor's God; our Saviour his Saviour. Never for a moment can we let go the conviction that he "left not himself without witness" and that he "will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth." That is to say: there is no area of unbelief into which we enter as total aliens: God is there already. And that must be the basis of our approach. When we speak the word "God," a point of reference is already established, even though it may not be acknowledged or even recognized. The man for whom the world contains no recognizable reality to correspond to our religious terms is not living — except as he chooses to — in a hermetically sealed environment. He surely knows these fitful intimations of immortality that haunt the waking dreams of the toughest sceptic:

> Just when we're safest, there's a sunset touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell. Someone's death.
> A chorus-ending from Euripides,
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears —
> The grand Perhaps.

It is to that "grand perhaps" that we have to direct our witness.

A student in Australia once spent a good hour trying to persuade me that our religious experience, the sunset touch, the fancy from a flower-bell, the chorus-ending from Euripides, our prayers, our knowledge of God, while still a mystery, will one day be perfectly explainable in terms of purely physical reactions pre-determined by scientific law. "We shall be able to put you in a box," he said, "and when you pray and think you are in touch with God, we shall be able to read off from the dials of the machine the exact chemical changes, or whatever it is, that make you feel that way." My answer was: "All right, and let's take it further. Suppose you were in that box when you are making this statement. Could I not read off from the dials just what it is that makes *you* feel this way? In other words, on your own argument, what you have just said can't be true. It can only be a series of noises that you can't help making." It began to dawn on him that his scientific determinism led to a position where it couldn't be true, for if it were, then there is no such thing as truth — only pre-determined reactions. Then he said the revealing thing: "Do you think that if there is a God he will understand why I have to think like this?"

These words introduce us to a generation of the scientifically trained whose education has made them impervious to the accepted vocabulary of the church, and even sometimes to a whole range of experience that lies beyond the observable and measurable. It is these young neighbors we have to keep in mind when we make our assumptions about religion, and when we scatter around the terminology of the church. It will take more labor and prayer than we have yet given before we find the words that reach to that inward point where they stand with us as

an infant crying in the night,
an infant crying for the light,
and with no language but a cry.

(2) The impact of this area of total unbelief upon the surrounding fringe of semi-believers is greater than we have cared to believe. Just as the typical modern unbeliever is not an atheist in the old-fashioned sense, but simply one who professes to find no meaning whatever in the vocabulary of belief, so the semi-believer (still probably attached to a church) is not so much worried by specific doubts as by a nagging sense of unreality. This is the man whose need we do not meet with our normal apologetics, our line of explanatory talk and writing. Typical is the man who attended a Confirmation class for several weeks and then was asked by the minister if he had any special difficulties with the credal statements of the church. "None whatever," he replied, "I accept the lot — and *they don't mean a thing.*"

What brings my neighbor — thousands of them — to this position? And what then do we say? It is too easy to say that the problem is not with their minds but with their hearts. This is probably true, and many a neighbor who sits in dazed and dumb agreement under our most scintillating and convincing exposition of the faith walks away to find his needs met at Madison Square Garden. Of this we in the churches must take note and draw conclusions. But precisely the same problem can arise again, and sometimes more acutely, when a man who has responded to an evangelist's appeal finds himself out on the street on a Monday morning with a spiritual hang-over. All of us, with whatever type of evangelism we are concerned, are confronted with this neighbor for whom the living faith has gone dead. Would it be an exaggeration to say that there are more men and women in this state now than at any other time in living memory? So far as they know, they believe in God, and in all the major doctrines of the church — but nothing of it all is *real.*

We can attribute this condition (if this does not sound too clinical) to two major factors in our civilization. And when we look at them squarely we should learn much about the conditions under which we carry out the mission to my neighbor.

a. One is the dualism which runs deeply through modern society. We have been conditioned to the division of life into the material and the spiritual; the secular and the sacred. The secular world is in most people's minds the *real* world, the world with which we have to do. In it the real decisions are made and the business of life transacted. The spiritual world then tends to become an extra — a floating cloud of ideas and emotions which may be harnessed to give strength and validity to what we do in the material world. Nothing could be further from the Biblical message that is the heart of our mission. No writing of Holy Scripture acknowledges any kind of autonomy of the secular, or isolates the spiritual. And our neighbor will not recover his sense that the message of the church is about real life, so long as we talk in terms of this non-Biblical dualism. It has been said that it was the function of the Hebrew prophets to abolish religion, and there is a sense in which this is profoundly true of the Christian gospel. The Incarnation was the revelation of God, not in "spiritual values," but in flesh and blood. It is when our neighbor is confronted with the gospel — this holy materialism — that he will be able to recover his sense that this is real, and find the creeds come alive in terms of the world of flesh and blood.

b. Another influence to which our neighbor is exposed which tends to rob his vestigial faith of meaning is the climate of moral nihilism and despair. Running counter to, yet perhaps in part evoking, the current revival of religious interest, is a profound tide of hopelessness and moral defeatism. The society in which we live is paralyzed to an unprecedented degree by the threats which have developed to the continuance of life itself, and by the massive political and scientific apparatus which, though created by man, nevertheless acts upon him with an impersonal and implacable fatality. The idealism which was so marked a feature of the American attitude is giving place to a desire for security above all, and to a profound scepticism as to the worth-whileness of moral effort.

We must remember that a generation has arisen that rejects the slogans of progress and shudders at every moral platitude that is uttered in the pulpit or on the political platform. The hero of the English play "Look Back in Anger" remarks savagely that there are no more causes to fight for. His father could die in World War II believing that he gave his life for some purpose, but this generation

can only expect to die as simple victims of general catastrophe. If Britain's "angry young men" are a local and minority phenomenon, their attitude is nevertheless reflected throughout the modern world. Another play provides the atmosphere in which our neighbors live. "Waiting for Godot" is unintelligible precisely because this is felt to be an unintelligible world and, as its characters wade around in its shapeless oratory, we sense the meaninglessness of life as it appears to millions.

When meaning in any sense drops out of life, then religion is a first casualty. For every ethical faith, and supremely Christianity, has to do with a pattern that is discerned amid the flux of events and the maze of daily experience. When our neighbor surrenders to the view that nothing really matters, that nothing has any permanent meaning, and that therefore we must eat, drink, and be comfortable (for merriness is now beyond his reach), then such religion as he has will be as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

The mission to my neighbor will then have to reckon with this sensitive area as we present our Christian convictions. Or perhaps we might call this an "insensitive area," for its characteristic is not not so much that our proclamation of good news causes offence, as that it sounds remote and irrelevant. Our problem, then, is how to impart the conviction that life can have meaning and that man's responsibility to God has not been severed by the anonymous powers of our atomic age. We have to demonstrate that this little world is not encircled by Sputnik — that ambiguous symbol of man's strength and weakness — but still by the Spirit of the living God.

This will not be done by words alone. The power of the gospel as spoken news is not to be underestimated, but no amount of talking — not even a sermon series on "The Relevance of Christianity!" — is going to bring alive again those moribund convictions of our neighbor on the fringe. It will require the total demonstration of the gospel, in action as in word. There are those today who will find again a meaningful faith only in the context of the living church — and by that I mean a real community of Christians whose care for one another overspills into a real concern for their neighbors. The answer to meaninglessness is not an exposition of the first question of the catechism: "What is the chief end of man?" in terms of smart apologetic, so much as in terms of that practical caring and love through which we begin to glorify God and enjoy him forever. The pattern comes back to life when the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God (those central and controlling facts of our gospel) are seen incarnated in a fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

(3) Among the other sensitive areas of Christian conviction that should be our concern there is one to which we must give renewed attention. From the first proclamation of the Christian gospel, a major cause of offence to the non-Christian neighbor has always been its absolutism and apparent exclusiveness and intolerance. From the first time a man was able to say "Jesus is Lord," he could not help implying "Caesar is not; Buddha is not; Artemis is not." And the pagan world was not slow to react with charges of arrogance and bigotry among Christians. There have been periods — we have just emerged from one — when Protestants quietly dropped this absolute claim and reached, or tried to reach, a position of compromise and mutual acceptance with other faiths. Yet, whenever the church has been shaken by a theological revival, whenever she has been swung back to her Biblical foundations, the absolute nature of the Christian claim has been sounded with new vigor and conviction. However attractive may be the picture of the higher syncretism painted by the master hand of a Toynbee, and however shrewd and damaging his attack on the ugly features in the history of Jewish and Christian exclusiveness, no one has yet succeeded in demonstrating how commitment to the Lordship of Christ can be reconciled with the admission of other Lords to share his throne. The documents of the New Testament give witness to a unique event and a unique salvation, and the Christ who emerges from them is one who must be met on his own terms. That these are absolute, no unprejudiced reader can doubt; and so the Christian finds himself confronting his neighbor, not with an invitation to accept a religious view of life, but with a Christ who invites a total and undivided allegiance.

There is no single question that is more often raised within the context of the mission to my neighbor than this one. If you speak about the Christian gospel on a university campus and call for questions, you can be certain that one of the first will deal with some aspect of Christian exclusiveness (usually, for some odd reason, in the form of "What about the Mohammedans?" — not indicating any profound knowledge of the Koran and enthusiasm for the Muslim religion so much as a desire to protest what looks to them like Christian intolerance). And whenever we find our neighbor seriously considering the content of the Christian faith, we find that his major intellectual difficulty has to do with some variant of this same problem.

We are living in a society where religious tolerance, very loosely defined, is a major civic virtue. I say, "loosely defined," for there are two very different ways in which the virtue of tolerance can be interpreted and practiced. The tolerance that belongs to the gospel in the teaching of the New Testament and the normal practice of

Reformed Christianity is that which respects the freedom of all men to maintain and disseminate whatever religious views their conscience approves. I may believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is God's supreme revelation to men and the Lord and Saviour of all, without seeking in any way to restrain the liberty of my neighbor to worship an idol in his back-yard or to propagate in print or on the platform some esoteric religion derived from a Hindu prophet or the Dead Sea Scrolls. For the claim of Christ is a claim of love; and the mission to my neighbor, the methods of evangelism, must be based on a love which always respects the freedom of the human soul. Coercive methods — and this covers not only legislative pressures but also the abuse of the modern means of propaganda — call down upon us the rebuke: "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." This tolerance which derives from the gospel of grace is in no way incompatible with firm belief in the finality and uniqueness of our Lord.

It is another kind of tolerance that today conditions the minds of the multitude of our neighbors. It is sounded at all levels from club-car gossip to the pronouncements of high authority. And it is based on the naive assumption that "religion is a good thing," and the fallacy that it doesn't really matter what religion a man or woman may profess. This kind of tolerance is not based on a realization of the implications of Christian love and liberty, but on a mental laziness and an unwillingness to take sides. A nation that confuses tolerance with this religious and moral neutralism is creating a vacuum into which a totalitarian faith may slide to destroy in the end every vestige of that true tolerance on which a Christian society depends.

When Jesus says "I am the Way and the Life," he immediately raises the question of the Truth. And this is the question our neighbor is anxious to avoid. He prefers to think that planes marked Moscow, Jerusalem, Rome, and the Moon are "all going the same way in the end" — although a moment's reflection will assure him this is highly unlikely. He delights in the soft eiderdown called "Inter-Faith," which so comfortably covers quite radical differences of belief — which cannot all be true — and in the blessed phrase "church of your choice," which suggests that divine truth can be discovered in much the same way as a lady chooses a new hat: you take what suits you best. We must accept the fact that the presentation of Jesus Christ as Lord must always be a disturbance in the atmosphere of pseudo-tolerance. For he has a way of reaching to the roots of our being and demanding a Yes or No.

The art of Christian apologetics will here be concerned not with the scaling down of the demands of Christ, but with freeing them

from association with our pride and prejudice. When I was passing through the Middle East a few years ago on a ship returning from Australia, a lady on deck turned to me and said: "When you see these people here and how they practice their religion, doesn't it seem cheek on our part to try to give them ours?" Thus speaks, and thinks, our neighbor. Our task now, as it was mine on that occasion, is to show that Christ is not *our* possession, but that we and the whole family of men are *his*. We claim no finality or monopoly of truth for the Western version of a religion that came to us from the Middle East, but we claim that when we — or any of our neighbors near or far — have met with the living Christ, there is no other Lord with whom his worship can be shared.

What is it that in the end gives us confidence that in the mission to our neighbor the Word can still break through into these areas of difficulty and doubt? Not the shrewdness of our apologetic, not the vigor of our church activity: but the knowledge that Jesus Christ *is* Lord. Our neighbors live in a world he *has* redeemed. And the language that he speaks — the language of a love that triumphs through suffering — speaks to men and women at their point of greatest need and will by them be understood.

THE GREENE LECTURES

THE QUALITY OF MERCY

ALBERT C. OUTLER

A Brief Summary of
The Greene Lectures of 1957 at
Andover Newton Theological School

I

"THE COURSE OF JUSTICE"

The first lecture began with an analysis of the widespread phenomena of guilt and anxiety in modern society. They are regarded as signs of man's primitive "instinct" for justice as the fabric of his interpersonal relation and of man's unconscious fear of justice as the measure and canon of his behavior. No man can live well without the felt need to be "justified" — and this means, in the last analysis, to be just! But justice turns out to be an anomaly in human experience as we know it. It is a demand that we cannot reject and that we cannot fulfill. The anomaly of justice is illustrated by reference to The Merchant of Venice, and especially in Portia's famous "mercy speech" from which the lectures take their titles. "Consider this, that in the course of justice none of us should see salvation."

The lecture then went on to describe the revolts against justice in the modern world: the revolt of ethical relativism, which reduces justice to a matter of social sanction; the revolt of "realism," which reduces justice to a weapon in the power struggle; and the revolt of sentimentalism, which reduces justice to the subjective judgment of "what men want" instead of asking "what men ought." It is no accident that these theoretical rejections of justice are correlated with the rise of guilt and anxiety symptoms in modern society. These in turn are correlated with the rise and spread of psychopathic symptoms as these appear in the behavior of "rebels without a cause," adolescents and adults with stifled or brazen consciences. If these tendencies persist, they will so dilute and dissolve the moral substance of modern society that it will be fatally easy to slide further into the morass of conformism, collectivism, and authoritarianism. Human sanctions are not enough to make or to keep a human society moral, and especially is this true in a time of convulsive social change.

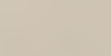
One of the most urgent tasks, therefore, confronting Christians and the Christian church today is the recovery of a Christian concern

for justice. We must reaffirm with new vigor and clarity the primacy of God's Kingdom and his righteousness in human affairs, and we must rehabilitate our sense of the objectivity and divine authority of the moral law. Against every antinomianism Christianity must reassert the basic New Testament insight that God's law is "holy, just and good."

But we cannot really plump for justice unless we know in our hearts and lives that there is something better than mere justice — unless we know that justice is a function of love, for only if love is the source of justice can we satisfy our need to be justified and overcome our fear of justice as God's measure of our lives, for we are as incapable of doing justice as we are incapable of doing without it.

The soaring confidence of Romans 8 is inauthentic unless it follows the honest agony of Romans 7. We are not truly justified by faith unless the faith which justifies us is itself just. If God's mercy is contrary to his justice, then man's choice is between a desperate moralism or an antinomian salvation which, in effect, scorns the cause of justice.

But what if there is mercy which is also just — a higher and more fully integral justice than we can ever know in our present estranged lives? What if there is mercy which imparts righteousness as well as imputes it? If this were the truth, then mercy itself would become the strongest force for righteousness in the faithful heart. Thus, men could turn with astounded eyes and hearts to the God of all mercy and grace whose righteous love renews his claim upon our lives that we be just and restores us to his communion, as reconciled children, confident of his love and of its power to enable us to fulfill the higher righteousness.



II

"'Tis Mightiest in the Mightiest"

The second lecture stressed the wonder of Biblical religion: its constant and unforced insistence that the Righteous One is the Merciful One, that God's love holds his justice and mercy in true balance, as his equal care for both the right and the good in every human situation. God's mercy is the proof of his sovereign power — "'tis mightiest in the mightiest!" The ethical monotheism of Judaism and Christianity is then contrasted with the immoralist principles of nature religions and pantheistic religions and atheistic religions.

Dr. Outler then referred back to his analysis of guilt and anxiety in the first lecture and called attention to the strategies for handling them that have been developed in modern psychotherapy. These strategies are affirmed to be effective and valid as far as they go, but they cannot deal with the ultimate issue of man before God and his "justification" by God. Here the question is not what man can do for himself, but what God has done for us and what we can do to respond to his redemptive action.

This led to a discussion of God's redemptive work in Jesus Christ and the basic change in man which this calls forth. The Biblical name for this basic change is *metanoia,* "repentance." Repentance is contrasted with remorse and is defined as a man's candid self knowledge gained in God's presence. The meaning of "confession" and repentance is illustrated from Augustine's *Confessions* and from the *Blutaltar* of Tilman Riemenschneider at Rothenburg.

The Christian gospel is *good news* to people who are willing to face up to the fact that they are mixed and snarled up, at odds with themselves and their fellows and with God — who have been believing that they had to work out the consequences of their guilt and estrangement by themselves. It is the wonderfully hopeful message that they do not have to do this by and for themselves — for they cannot, in any case. It is the message that God has made reconciliation possible through his own initiative — that he is even now breaking the power of sin and guilt to stifle or strangle or corrupt our lives with fear and slavery and despair. It is the good news of real forgiveness to "all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn from their sins." God's mercy is the gift of — himself! And it may be received by us because it is offered through one who is truly one of us.

But men who have received God's mercy must — and are enabled to — be merciful. The gift of mercy includes the power to be merciful — just as the gift of justification includes the power to become just. Thus the Christian imperative is to a life of love in which the faithful Christian shares God's equal concern both for the right and the good — mercy without magic, justice without revenge. This divine imperative shapes the Christian ethic and gives it its energy. The shape of the Christian ethic is "the imitation of Christ" (cf. John 13:12-17, 34-35; Eph. 4:30-5:2). The energy of the Christian ethic is gratitude: "That ye love one another as I have loved you." The Christian is one who is inwardly secure and outwardly concerned, secure in his knowledge of God's mercy to himself, and concerned because he knows of God's love for all his creatures, "our brethren for whom Christ died." This, then, is our justification — that we rest all our hopes for salvation on God's merciful love and bend all our energies in the expression of his righteous love.

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison is the heart's cry of the truly penitent. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth" is the prayerful resolution of the truly forgiven.

Some such message as this would change the weather of man's heart and the texture and feel of his existence. And it is our message to share, if we have received it in our hearts by faith and intend to make it known to all who will heed us, in words and action, by precept and example. Thus is the community of Christians built up in the Lord — the community of those who know and are moved to celebrate God's astounding goodness to us and to all men!

THE SOUTHWORTH LECTURE

ESCAPE FROM THE DEAD HAND

CLAUDE M. FUESS

The Southworth Lectureship, upon "various aspects of congregational polity," was established ninety-one years ago by two generous benefactors of Andover Theological Seminary. It is being given this evening in 1957 by a layman who, to say the least, is not internationally famous as an authority upon the assigned subject. In 1908, however, the Reverend John Winthrop Platner chose as his topic "The History of Andover Theological Seminary, a Centennial Retrospect"; and perhaps I too may be forgiven if, at the close of one hundred and fifty institutional years, I deal more with events than with organization, more with men than with dogmas, and more with facts than with doctrine.

By way of explanation, although not of excuse, I must acknowledge that I started unversed in the semantics of theology. Even now I find myself bewildered by harsh terms alien to my vocabulary, such as Chrestomathy and Catechistics and Hermeneutics. The regulations of this Seminary required that every professor at the time of his inauguration — and every five years thereafter — should solemnly pledge himself to maintain its written creed, in opposition "not only to Atheists and Infidels, but to Jews, Papists, Mahomedans, Arians, Pelagians, Antinomians, Arminians, Sabellians, Socinians, Unitarians, and Universalists." How many of the faculty of the Andover Newton Theological School can offer an accurate definition of each one of these obnoxious sects? If a real live Socinian or Sabellian should appear in the flesh at a gathering like this and attempt to elucidate his favorite heresies, would he be recognized at once as a peril to our society? Frankly I have a sneaking fondness for the Pelagians, who believed that there was no original sin through Adam and therefore no hereditary guilt, that the will is free and the grace of God universal.

Starting as a manifestation of Christian democracy, the Congregational Church shortly became in New England a somewhat rigid oligarchy, indeed often a local despotism. A passing traveler once asked of the Reverend Samuel Phillips, of Andover, "Are you, sir, the parson who serves here?" "I am, sir, the parson who rules here," was Phillips's ready and not altogether humorous reply. The outgrowth of a protest in England against the Episcopacy, Congregationalism functioned in Massachusetts virtually as a state church until 1833,

and was closely allied with the conservative elements in the community. With the election in 1800 of Thomas Jefferson as President of the United States, the "solid men" of New England were appalled, for the Virginian was radical not only in his theories of government but also in his conceptions of religion. At the same time that Jefferson's Embargo was damaging New England commerce, Unitarianism was invading Boston and Harvard College. Retaliation was not long delayed. At almost the precise moment when Timothy Pickering and his Essex Junto associates were plotting to withdraw New England from the Union, Andover Theological Seminary came into being. Federalists and Calvinists joined in opposition to a rapidly expanding liberalism supposed to be dangerous to both.

The story of the founding of Andover Theological Seminary has frequently been related, and I have no intention of reiterating the well-known. It seems to be easy for well-intentioned enthusiasts to convince themselves that they, and they alone, possess the truth and are therefore justified in making every effort to perpetuate it. Unfortunately it is equally easy to conclude that ancillary non-essentials are as much worth defending as the basic truth itself. Professor Whitehead once remarked in conversation, "It is the *interpreters* of Christianity who have been its misfortune"; and Professor Rowe, the historian of our Seminary, wrote, "Always there was danger that the emphasis on sound doctrine in the Seminary should divert attention from religion itself to the *science* of religion." An astounding number of blunders have been perpetrated in the name of, and for the protection of, orthodoxy. On such matters we who love this Seminary might as well be frank. We shall have plenty to say about its virtues as we proceed with this lecture.

Many of the Seminary's difficulties were inherent in the personality and character of its chief projector, Eliphalet Pearson, a man of both talent and mystery. A Harvard graduate, he joined his friend, Samuel Phillips, Jr., in Andover, where in 1778 he helped to found Phillips Academy and became its first Preceptor. There he was long remembered for his "big name, big fame, big voice, and beetling brow." Elected in 1785 as Hancock Professor of Hebrew and the Oriental Languages at Harvard, Pearson was for the next twenty years intimately connected with that college. Nevertheless he continued to be a member of the Academy Board of Trustees and, on August 17, 1802, was chosen its President. Meanwhile his responsibilities at Harvard had increased. In 1800 he became a Fellow of the Corporation, and in September, 1804, following the death of Joseph Willard, he took over the duties of Acting President.

Already, however, Pearson had become a controversial figure. He brought on a bitter quarrel in the Harvard Corporation by insisting that the successor of Dr. Tappan, the Hollis Professor of Divinity, should be a strict and orthodox Calvinist. Notwithstanding Pearson's stubborn opposition, the Reverend Henry Ware, of Unitarian sympathies, was chosen to the vacant professorship. As a final blow, Pearson, an avowed candidate for the presidency of the college, was rejected in favor of Professor Samuel Webber. Defeated, disgruntled, and discredited, Pearson resigned as Hancock Professor, in a letter bitterly denouncing Harvard policies. His Andover friends promptly offered him a house near Phillips Academy, rent-free for a year. There, indignant over his defeats, Pearson found the financial support which led to the founding of Andover Theological Seminary, under the control and aegis of the Trustees of Phillips Academy.

Pearson was a remarkable figure, aggressive and cantankerous, but extraordinarily versatile. He was a polyglot, with a profound knowledge of ancient languages; he was a musician, who played the violoncello and wrote a treatise on psalmody; he was a skilled mechanic and scientist, who helped young Samuel Phillips work out a formula for producing gunpowder during the Revolution; and he was a capable administrator, of whom George Washington said, "His eye shows him worthy, not only to lead boys but to command men." But he was far from popular with his Andover pupils, who nicknamed him "Elephant" because of his ponderous name and body. He was self-willed and obstinate, with a complete disregard of the wishes of others. Indeed he once confessed to his son, "I care not a straw what the world thinks of me." This estimate of his temperament is confirmed by certain of his unpublished letters now in the Yale University Library. What he called frankness sometimes resembled insult. A passionate dogmatist, he did not hesitate to try to enforce his will on the unborn.

The Founders of Andover Theological Seminary, whether Catechism Calvinists, like Dr. Pearson and his Andover supporters, or Consistent Calvinists, like Dr. Samuel Spring, Dr. Leonard Woods, and the leaders of the so-called Associate Foundation, deliberately prepared a creed which they hoped might endure forever, forgetting that static religions are the death of thought. The two groups joined forces after what Professor Dwight called "a long and complicated negotiation between theologians of great ability and astuteness in drawing fine-spun distinctions." Nothing but the fear felt by both parties for the rapid spread of Unitarianism could possibly have brought them together. On some points they never agreed, but they

did intend to make certain that no future professor on the faculty should promulgate what they regarded as heresy. This is not exaggeration. They stated their intention in no vague terms. They attempted to control the thought of later generations. With them, to use the phrasing of Dr. Charles C. Merrill in an earlier Southworth Lecture, "Fellowship became only another name for coercion." That this Seminary has survived to our time, flourishing and dynamic, is due to its courageous rebellion against this Dead Hand. This is my central theme, which will, I trust, integrate this lecture.

The Founders admittedly aimed to create an institution which should "maintain the doctrines of the fathers of New England against the threatened apostasies of the times." It was to be literally a "Citadel of Orthodoxy" against which the rising tide of radicalism would beat in vain. That it was more often referred to as "Brimstone Hill" illustrates a popular reaction to the grim theology of which it was supposed to be the symbol. Each professor under the Associate Foundation had, at his inauguration, to recite these words, "I, moreover, believe that God, according to the counsel of his own will and *for his own glory,* hath foreordained whatsoever cometh to pass." This may be true, so far as I know, but it would be difficult to prove it. The Associated Statutes declared, "It is strictly and solemnly enjoined, and left in sacred charge, that every article of the above Creed shall forever remain entirely and identically the same, without the least alteration, or any addition or diminution." Read today, in the light of modern thought, these words have an almost sinister connotation. Lord Hobhouse, writing on the broad subject of charitable bequests, once asserted that "foundations attaching endowments to the holding and teaching of prescribed opinions are, *if they are to be unalterable,* the very worst kind of foundations that can be conceived." To this comment all of us would, I am sure, be ready to subscribe.

The ostensible purpose of Andover Theological Seminary, however, was to defend the faith. After reconciling their own creedal differences, the Founders insisted on complete conformity with their compromise, thus defying all the first principles of growth and evolution. They would not have agreed with Judge Learned Hand's recent remark, "Our dangers, it seems to me, are not from the outrageous but from the conforming" — a sound text for a Seminary sermon. Only the dead trees do not alter their shape and size and color with the hurrying years. Any live institution, whether a college or a political party or a church, must undergo a constant process of readjustment in the light of fresh knowledge and changing times.

As the 19th century unfolded, major concepts in mathematics, astronomy, physics, and biology inevitably were altered, and the minds of men were confronted with facts never before available. Most philosophers and scientists welcomed both the new evidence and the hypotheses which they necessitated; and it is to the credit of Andover Theological Seminary that so many of its teachers and students modified their convictions accordingly. The Seminary's historian rightly points out that the time arrived when young men about to enter the ministry were impatient "with outworn creeds and doubtful of the value of institutions that were based on such creeds." Bishop William Lawrence, a graduate in the Class of 1874, once said to me significantly, "From the viewpoint of the Founders of the Seminary nearly all my professors were heretics."

Among those concerned with the administration of this Seminary disagreements became apparent almost immediately. It was largely through Eliphalet Pearson's indefatigable efforts that the Andover and Newburyport groups were persuaded to unite in their opposition to liberalism. He himself was formally ordained as a clergyman, with much ceremony, on September 22, 1808, and was named the first Professor of Natural Theology. He was thus simultaneously President of the Board of Trustees and a member of the Faculty — an unwise arrangement which could not last very long. At the end of one year Pearson resigned as Professor. The only explanation of this action came from Professor Edwards A. Park, who wrote years afterward, "I suppose that Pearson left the Seminary through dissatisfaction with Dr. Woods." He retained the presidency of the Board, however, until August 21, 1821, an imperial and imperious autocrat who was a thorn in the flesh of his associates. He died, September 12, 1826, while on a visit to his daughter in Greenfield, New Hampshire, and was buried in the local cemetery. The tradition that in his last days he became a Unitarian I have been unable to verify. It is indeed ironical that, although Pearson was the chief instigator of this Seminary, he is not mentioned by name in the official *History of American Congregationalism.*

The Seminary had been open only a short time before some of its creators became suspicious that their wishes were not being followed. That pungent, anti-Jeffersonian clergyman, Nathaniel Emmons, wrote in 1819:

> I have feared and do still more and more fear that the richly endowed Seminary will ere long become the fountain of theological errors, and disseminate them through all New England, if not this America. I have for some time been convinced that

neither the teachers nor the taught strictly adhere to that excellent Creed upon which the institution was professedly founded. They are, in fact, verging towards the absurdities of the Old Calvinism.

There was indeed early evidence that the Dead Hand was resented. Consider, for example, the noble utterance of Professor Moses Stuart at the dedication of Bartlet Chapel in 1818:

> We profess to adopt for substance the sentiments of the Westminster Catechism, but it is not our standard of orthodoxy, nor any other human production. In principle, I believe also in practice, we are genuine Protestants. The Bible we regard as the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice. We believe in the doctrines of our creed, merely because we suppose the Bible teaches them. We profess not to shrink from the most strenuous investigation. I am bold to say, there is not a school of theology on earth where more free and unlimited investigation is indulged, nay inculcated and practiced. The shelves of our library are loaded with books of Latitudianarians and Skeptics, which are read and studied. We have no apprehension that the truths we believe are to suffer by such an investigation.

The Trustees soon voted, very wisely, that the students must not be required to subscribe to any creed; and they, on their part, showed a rather remarkable range of occupation. Joseph R. Andrus, a student in 1814, was ordained as an Episcopal Deacon in 1816 and as a priest in 1817, apparently the first Andoverian to became a clergyman in that church, although Jasper Adams, a student in 1815-16, also took orders as an Episcopal minister. In the Class of 1819 Orville Dewey actually became a Unitarian preacher. Hiram Bingham was our earliest missionary to the Hawaiian Islands. Two members of the same class — Worthington Smith and Joseph Torrey — became Presidents of the University of Vermont; and one non-graduate, Francis Wayland, ordained as a Baptist minister, was later the distinguished President of Brown University from 1827 to 1855. Another, Aaron Warner, ended as Professor of Rhetoric, Oratory, and English Literature at Amherst. Two brilliant men — Isaac Chase, of the Class of 1817, and Henry Jones Ripley, of the Class of 1819 — were among the earliest professors at the Newton Theological Institution, founded in 1825. In short, one could never tell what post, lay or clerical, a graduate of Andover Theological Seminary was likely to hold.

Nothing very serious was involved when alumni of Andover Theological Seminary, despite its rigid creed, turned out to be Baptists, Presbyterians, or Episcopalians, or mere college presidents; but it was clear that such men just could not be fenced in. Battling against this trend was the supreme heresy hunter of his generation, the Reverend Daniel Dana, a graduate of Dartmouth College and for a few months its President and a member of the Seminary Board from 1804 to 1856. Pastor of a parish in Newburyport for many years, he was so close a neighbor that his devotion to orthodoxy and his sensitivity to error could be quickly felt by members of the Faculty. As a Trustee he had refrained from voting to establish the Associate Foundation and had objected strenuously to the appointment of the gentle, saintly Leonard Woods as Professor of Christian Theology. In 1826 the Trustees, led by Dana, had insisted that both the Catechism and the Creed must be accepted by all the Professors, but in 1842 this vote, so far as the Faculty of the Associate Foundation were concerned, was rescinded, and they were asked only to subscribe to and repeat the Creed. Even this slight concession disturbed Dana, who remonstrated with his associates, without changing their decision.

In this instance the Dead Hand proved to be impotent. Actually the first case of real martyrdom was that of James Murdock, who was inaugurated on June 20, 1819, as Bartlet Professor and five years later became Brown Professor of Ecclesiastical History. He was a Yale graduate, "a little dry man with a large elastic brain and nerves like catgut," a profound scholar whose quality and reputation were recognized by a doctorate of divinity from Harvard in the very year he came to Andover. This signal honor from liberal Harvard may have made him suspect from the beginning; but in 1823 he contributed to his own downfall by publishing a sermon entitled *The Nature of the Atonement,* a highly controversial subject on which he could hardly hope to please everybody. The audacious theologian was hunted down by "the watchdogs of Sion," as they were irreverently called, and asked to explain himself. Murdock escaped punishment for the moment by declaring his honest opinion that the sentiments in his sermon were entirely consistent with the Creed of the Seminary. His critics were not done with him, however, and four years later, after a prolonged and bitter controversy, secured his dismissal on the ostensible ground that he was "unwilling to see ecclesiastical history crowded from the curriculum in favor of sacred rhetoric." Thus he had to go; but the painful incident really confirms my thesis, for he was discharged, not for heresy, but for alleged lack of cooperation. The Dead Hand functioned here only indirectly, even though it did claim a victim.

Every one familiar with our Seminary knows that its endowers created a self-perpetuating Board of Visitors, three in number — two clergymen and one layman — with power to review the actions of the Trustees and in a broad way to see that the true intentions of the Founders were carried out. Although over the years it included some able, fair-minded, and progressive gentlemen, like Professor John Codman, President Mark Hopkins, of Williams, Dr. Ray Palmer, and President Julius H. Seelye, of Amherst, it was a perfect instrument for securing the continued dominance of the Dead Hand. Both in theory and in operation it was an unnecessary and foolish appendage, the existence of which nearly wrecked the Seminary.

The Visitors had to meet their first crucial test in 1847, when Professor Edwards A. Park, who had been Professor of Sacred Rhetoric at the Seminary since 1836, was nominated as Professor of Christian Theology. Dr. Dana then saw fit to publish in pamphlet form a *Remonstance* so absurd that it seems today incredible. He began by pointing out that, although the Catechism recognizes the doctrine of original sin, Professor Park, in gross error, had held and taught that our nature is not sinful and that original sin is not sin. This, said Dana triumphantly, nullifies the cardinal and fundamental doctrine of natural depravity. There was much more to the argument, but the Visitors, after an investigation, over-ruled Dr. Dana's protest against the appointment and confirmed Park. Once more the Dead Hand had been invoked — to no avail!

The further story of Professor Park is so dramatic that, although it is familiar, it deserves repetition. Denounced by Dr. Dana in 1847 as a heretic, he himself became as time went on the outstanding opponent and champion of the old New England Calvinistic theology, the chief aim of which was, to quote his own words, "to exalt God as a sovereign and to glorify the eternal plan on which he governs the universe." Tall and ascetic in appearance, he might have posed for the Last Puritan. He was an eloquent pulpit orator, and his sermons on Judas and Peter, often repeated by request, never failed to thrill his congregations. But ignoring the profound changes which were taking place in the world of scientific thought, and even in Biblical criticism, Professor Park taught the same theological system in 1880 that he taught forty years before. As a little girl Elizabeth Stuart Phelps thought she remembered hearing him, on a moonlight evening in May, saying to a class in theology, "A sin is a wrong committed against God. God is an Infinite Being; therefore sin against Him is an infinite wrong. An infinite wrong against an Infinite Being deserves an infinite punishment." Whether or not Professor

Park put the matter in just such cruel words, he was unquestionably the advocate of Calvinistic orthodoxy, built on the twin tenets of sin and salvation; and he was more concerned to make his students believers in that system than to build them into independent thinkers.

It is part of my argument that those who, like Dr. Dana and Dr. Park, protested against any relaxation of the restrictions governing the Seminary Faculty were always in the minority. But a resolute and vocal minority can cause plenty of trouble, whether in the United States Senate or on the teaching staff of a theological seminary. The final and decisive test of strength was to come in the 1880's after Professor Park had retired. In the very year of his departure, the Faculty, exercising their prerogative, recommended to the Trustees the name of the Reverend Newman Smyth to fill the vacant chair in Christianity Theology. Although Smyth was a biblical scholar and preacher with an outstanding record of usefulness, an investigation revealed the sad fact that he had expressed the opinion, and even the hope, that some of those who on earth had had no opportunity of knowing the personality and teachings of Jesus might undergo in the future life what was called "second probation," and thus be "saved." Thus the way to "salvation" might be opened to Socrates and the Elder Cato. This merciful solution of a real problem made conservative theologians fear that the Calvinistic dogma of eternal punishment was being relaxed. Hence, although the Trustees twice voted to elect Smyth, two of the three Visitors refused to concur, stating as their justification that Smyth "lacked the mental characteristics that were needed for clear, lucid teaching." Thus two obstinate literalists "dressed in a little brief authority" blocked the choice of a scholar who had been approved by both Faculty and Trustees and who in many quarters was regarded as almost a saint.

The reactionary *Congregationalist,* edited by Henry Martyn Dexter, joined the Visitors in disapproving Smyth's views on retribution after death. So unfortunately did the American Board of Foreign Missions. Smyth went elsewhere, and a year later two of the ablest professors, Charles Marsh Mead and Joseph Henry Thayer, resigned from the Seminary Faculty because they objected to repeating the Creed every five years. It was Thayer who once said to his class,

> Gentlemen, it is not for me to defend the faith. A true faith will defend itself. It is my duty to guide you with open mind, humble spirit, and a pure heart to the Truth, the Truth alone, wherever it may lead you, and be you sure that it will always lead you to a fuller knowledge of Christ, who is the truth.

Thayer went to Harvard Divinity School and Mead eventually to Hartford Theological Seminary. Their departure from Andover was a clear victory for the Dead Hand.

Meanwhile a group of courageous and enlightened younger professors were beginning to show their strength. The appointment of Egbert C. Smyth in 1863, of John Wesley Churchill in 1868, of William Jewett Tucker in 1879, and of George Harris and Edward Y. Hincks in 1883 introduced a fresh and optimistic spirit of liberalism. When Professor Harris delivered his persuasive inaugural address, the venerable Professor Park, although nominally in retirement, rushed into action and prepared a highly critical reply, ninety-six pages in length, which was shortly published by six of his admirers. Once more the issue was clearly drawn between modernists and traditionalists, the latter of whom, although not numerous, were aggressive, earnest, and sometimes unscrupulous. The five faculty leaders promptly founded a new magazine, *The Andover Review,* which they used as a sounding board for ideas; and in 1886 they produced a neat little volume, *Progressive Orthodoxy,* which had a considerable sale. My copy, once in the library of Samuel Edward Herrick, has annotations indicating that Smyth was the author of three chapters, Harris and Tucker of two each, and Hincks of one.

On many of the subjects of controversy I may not be regarded as competent to speak. But I am willing to trust Professor Henry K. Rowe, who has this to say on the matter:

> It is quite correct to speak of the new theology as more humane than the old. It was based on the love of God rather than on the rigors of the law. It envisaged human relations as well as divine, and saw that Christianity must be applied to these social relations and their economic and social problems.

Although the five professors had expressed their convictions politely, reasonably, and undogmatically, they aroused an animosity which must be described as furious. The much-advertised doctrine of "Second Probation" seems especially to have annoyed the Old Guard, who at once brought charges of heresy against the editors of the *Andover Review.* The *fons et origo* of this suppressive movement seems to have been Dexter, the militant and intolerant editor of the *Congregationalist.*

The resulitng trial, which had medieval aspects and aroused intense public interest, was held in late December, 1886, in Boston, before the Board of Visitors, who showed their bias by refusing to

allow the Trustees to appear. It was alleged that the five professors named in the complaint were "disloyal to the Hopkinsian Creed and the Westminster Catechism" and taught doctrines subversive of Calvinistic orthodoxy.

After a full hearing, with a formal statement by each defendant, one of the Visitors, Joshua Newell Marshall, a Lowell attorney who had served in the Massachusetts General Court, voted to condemn all five. President Julius H. Seelye, of Amherst College, a well-known scholar and publicist, voted to dismiss all the charges. The third member, the Reverend William T. Eustis, then pastor of the Memorial Church in Springfield, Massachusetts, for technical reasons which seem absurd to me, declined to vote except in the case of Professor Smyth, whom he found guilty as charged. The condemnation of Smyth alone was ridiculous, for the other four defendants were just as responsible as he. Contemporary press comment was scathing, and John Greenleaf Whittier, writing to his friend, Harriet Minot Pitman, said, "Does thee take much interest in the Andover trial? My sympathies are strongly with the professors, though I don't see how they can stick to the creed which girdles the university with its iron chain."

Thus convicted while the accusations against his associates were declared unproved, Professor Smyth appealed to the Supreme Judicial Court, which in 1891, after a long delay, reaffirmed the constitutionality and original jurisdiction of the Board of Visitors, but set aside the verdict removing him from his professorship. When a new hearing was held in 1892, at which his persecutors charged Smyth with pantheism, Universalism, and disreputable morality in continuing to hold his chair, the Board of Visitors, now changed in personnel, quickly dismissed the case. Smyth was vindicated, but the Dead Hand was still recognized and was a potential source of trouble.

In published contemporary accounts the fact that five professors had been prosecuted for heresy was unfortunately stressed more than their eventual acquittal. But the harm which the trials did to the Seminary has been much exaggerated. There was no discernible falling off in enrollment at the time. Thirteen men were graduated in 1886, seventeen in 1887, and twenty in 1888; and although the number decreased in 1889 to eight, it was back to thirteen in 1890 and 1891, and in 1892 rose to twenty-four, the largest in many years. By 1894, when the full vicious impact of the controversy might be supposed to make itself apparent, the Seminary graduated twenty-six men, some of them later very prominent in church affairs.

The arbitrary and capricious use of legal power by the Board of Visitors was deeply resented by Faculty, Trustees, and Alumni; and when the Visitors refused to permit the Trustees to become a party to the trial, they opened themselves to serious criticism. The Visitors continued to exist, but it seemed unlikely that they would ever again be allowed to claim control over Seminary policies.

For reasons unconnected with creedal disputes the Seminary, in 1808, exactly a century after its establishment, was transferred to Cambridge. The arrangements with Harvard Divinity School proved so satisfactory to both parties that in 1922 a so-called "Plan of Closer Affiliation" was adopted by the Trustees of the Seminary and the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Once again, however, the Dead Hand made its appearance. The Board of Visitors passed a resolution declaring the entire arrangement void; and after some delay the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth in 1926 held that the language of the original Constitution, Associate Statutes, and other fundamental documents was so unequivocal that no relaxed interpretation was possible, even though it had been demonstrated that no theological scholar of any importance could or would subscribe to a literal interpretation of their wording. This time the Dead Hand really clamped down. The Faculty of the Seminary resigned, and the Trustees voted that instruction should be suspended.

Common sense shortly asserted itself. A change in the personnel of the Board of Visitors made it possible to secure from the Supreme Court under the beneficent interpretation of *cy pres* a decision which allowed the Seminary to resume activities under policies as nearly as possible in conformity with the intentions of the Founders. The affiliation with the Newton Theological Institution, so satisfactory to all concerned, was then readily accomplished. The oppressive weight of the Dead Hand had at last been completely removed. The Seminary was now at liberty to go ahead and fulfill its manifest destiny; and under the inspired and inspiring leadership of Dean Vaughan Dabney it moved forward to a power and prosperity which have extended to this day.

In the prolonged, unceasing, and still unfinished battle of man for individual and institutional freedom, Andover Theological Seminary has played a significant role, not only through its repudiation of unwise restrictions but also through its constructive adaptation to changing intellectual climates. During its strange eventful history shadows have threatened to cover it. But the light of truth could never be extinguished. Even within the walls imposed

by its originators this Seminary has never been without its own illumination.

Nothing but the fear of being regarded as flippant kept me from entitling this lecture "From Pearson to Pearson." Between "Great Eliphalet" and our own "Roy" is a wide gap, not only in time but also in temperament and attitude. Although the older man meant well, he did not understand the desires and demands of free men. The Seminary which he helped to create now lays little emphasis on *mere* orthodoxy as a major virtue. It considers honest inquiry as more important than slavish conformity. It regards no one church or creed as possessing a monopoly of truth. It is sure that

> The One remains, the many change and pass;
> Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly.

Speaking quite humbly as a very new Trustee, I am happy that this Seminary, first by itself and then in affiliation with Newton, has proved that it can meet not one but a succession of challenges. After all, each generation should solve its own peculiar perplexities. The cherished orthodoxies of one age are often rightly rejected by the next. Again and again some David has followed a Saul, and he in turn has been replaced by a Solomon. Congregationalism, rightly understood, is no unalterable body of dogma but an interpretation of permanent truth in the light of contemporary conditions. Thus our Andover Seminary is no longer the Citadel of Orthodoxy but the Home of Protestant Freedom; no longer Brimstone Hill but rather the Mount of Compassion; the agent, not of divine punishment but of divine love. Mrs. Alfred North Whitehead tells the story of attending vespers at St. Mary's in Cambridge, England, and hearing the vicar say, as he closed his sermon, "Finally, my brethren, for well conducted people life presents no problems!" Andover Theological Seminary, a century and a half old, offers no such inane optimism; but it has replaced dogmatism by questioning, believing that questioning leads in the end to prayer and a redemptive Christian faith which is intellectually respectable.

One final and deeply personal note! For seventeen years of my professional career I lived at Andover in the flamboyant Victorian architectural atrocity built for Professor Tucker; and later, as Headmaster of Phillips Academy, I inherited the beautiful Georgian Colonial mansion constructed for the redoubtable Edward Dorr Griffin and afterwards the home of the more benign Austin Phelps. I hope that I learned something from the former occupants of both places.

In the spacious study of the Phelps House a little group of Seminary people founded in 1815 the American Education Society. Here was started the Boston *Recorder,* the first religious newspaper in America. Here the American Tract Society and the American Temperance Society were born. Often sitting in that domed south room, I could almost feel the living presence of the eminent scholars who sat and talked there; and I grew to respect their genius and accomplishment, their far-reaching vision, their deep sense of religious values, their spiritual vitality which endured through troubled times and unjust attack. Today this Seminary, in another location and liberated at last from the Dead Hand, is stronger than at any period in its history, a potent instrument for spreading the true gospel of love for man and love for Almighty God, particularly as revealed in his son, Jesus Christ. *Vivat, Crescat, Floreat in Aeternum!*

IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES M. McCONNELL

Member of the Faculty of Andover Newton Theological School

1929 - 1935

WALTER G. MUELDER

There is an interval between night and day when both the moon and the sun, on a morning when the sky is clear, bring light upon the earth. Seldom can the wonder of this short time between night and day be caught. A small boy once sensed it and rushed into his grandmother's bedroom and shouted "Wake up, Grandma . . . the world has begun!"

These lines were written by Charles M. McConnell about a year ago. Then he added, "I have lived to be a boy of seventy years."

As we stand in the twilight of mourning . . . dark with empty loneliness of sorrow and bereavement . . . and view the landscape changed by loss of a gentle and familiar form of life, let us look up and receive light from the moon of recollection and light from the dawning sun of faith . . . that we may know both consolation and comfort . . . and that we may say with this eternally young man . . . "the world has begun."

Rural New Hampshire is the fitting symbol and setting of much that meant most to this man whom we remember as husband, father, minister, teacher, writer, colleague and friend. Here is the rural community; here is the town and country church; here is life close to the elementary rhythms of seedtime and harvest.

When we think of him, our hearts are renewed by thoughts of elementary relationships: the farm family, the family farm, the creative power of the small community, and the love of the Christian fellowship in the church. He began his ministry in the days when Theodore Roosevelt was aroused to the needs of country life and established the Commission on Country Life. In the Methodist Church he played a leading part in giving spiritual depth and practical expression to the great movement on behalf of rural improvement.

He had an unerring sense of the values of country life and of the need to nourish, to conserve, and to enhance them. Underlying all of civilization and culture lies the natural cycle of life. Those in agriculture who serve to maintain this precious cycle need and deserve the best that the church can provide in its ministry to them. Often the true order seems to be inverted, not only in society but in the church. Many desert the countryside to find preferment in the city. His life was dedicated to restoring the right order. To this dedication he brought great wisdom and insight regarding the mission of the rural billion of mankind.

He was a pioneer in theological education. He recognized that if the spiritual renewal of rural life was to be effective the parish ministers would need adequate preparation. No teacher in any theological seminary has had as continuous a career in this field, or one that covered as many decades. Probably no theological professor in America has specifically prepared as many rural ministers as he. He helped establish commissions and associations which brought the theological schools into co-operative responsibilities in this important phase of seminary education.

Charles M. McConnell was "Pat" to his students and colleagues. He was a unique teacher. His methods were his own. They flowered in the small group — in the informal sharing of a great philosophy of life applied to concrete situations. He saw life in anecdotal units which, through his genius, became parables. He had a Christian's concern for the least of students. He was the friend of the perplexed and distraught. He was the inspirer of many who, as rural-lifers in the ministry, are the true monuments to his power to communicate concern and arouse commitment.

He was a wonderful colleague, loyal to his alma mater, his fellow teachers, and the ideals which they shared in common. His humor cut through artificiality and disguise to basic issues and principles. The perspective in which he placed problems was always large — like his social vision and his knowledge of human nature. No one had a profounder appreciation of the vocation of the School of Theology in the Methodist Church and in the growing ecumenicity of church life. He sought in town and country life the renewal and wholeness of the church.

As a teacher and counsellor his influence was wider than the classroom. He followed his students out across the nation, encouraging them, and advising them. He was an inveterate attendant at innumerable conferences and institutes, and a much sought after

speaker. He seldom lost an opportunity to build up the integrity, standards, and dignity of the small church and to instill the right philosophy of agricultural life. Like the prophets and the early Methodists, he sought renewal by returning to the primal springs of faith, truth, and action.

He was a great Bible teacher. He emphasized the rural character of the Scriptures. For many years he wrote Sunday School lessons for use in thousands of churches, large and small. Along with his books, these lesson materials constitute, when taken together, a voluminous literary achievement.

We can all take comfort — whether we are in the immediate family, or as friends and colleagues — in words of his which express his Christian testament and his witness. He says:

> I believe Jesus was right when he gave us his commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself." This puts the whole matter of working with others up to me and my neighbors and my God . . .
>
> There must have been something of God's Spirit breathed into my body and soul when I was created. I believe I can sense God's Spirit within me. I work with Him when, to the best of the knowledge and power that I can get from God and others, I try to do His will. There are times when I do not feel the presence of God within. Out of all these forces and personalities within me there comes a religious experience. There is one force in human life which comes only from God. It is something that can be had by an urgent desire and at the price marked. I have seen people pay it and I have seen the goods delivered by . . . God. IT IS LOVE. Now the words of Paul come to us in Romans 12:1 — "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

May I say to you in this hour of bereavement . . . He who has this faith abides in the shadow of the Eternal.